

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT WILL POST ORAL ARGUMENTS ON WEB

The Illinois Supreme Court announced Friday that it will begin publishing video and audio recordings of oral arguments on its website (www.state.il.us/court), beginning with the January 2008 Supreme Court term.

The arguments are anticipated to be available on the website no later than the day following the hearing.

Audio files will be in an MP3 format and the video files will be formatted in a Windows Media format, which are compatible with most computers using standard personal computer software. A podcast feed will be offered to receive the most recent postings of audio files.

“I’m very excited about this new technology,” said Chief Justice Robert R. Thomas. “It will provide the parties with a record of their appearance before the Court, and it will help the public better understand what we do.”

The video recordings will be captured by one of three cameras concealed in the Springfield Supreme Court courtroom. One camera is located in the front of the courtroom, behind the bench, and focuses on the attorneys as they address the Court. Another camera is located on a side wall of the courtroom and the third camera is located at the back of the courtroom.

The cameras will be controlled from a recording room staffed by the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, which operates the recording system and produces the audio and video recordings. The operator will have the ability to select the camera and focus each camera on the Court, individual Justices, and the attorneys.

The Administrative Office’s Judicial Management Information Services (JMIS) division coordinated the installation of the audio and video recording system. The presentation of audio and video on the Court’s website include many technologies and involve multiple staff in JMIS, said Skip Robertson, who heads the JMIS division of the Administrative Office.

MORE

Supreme Court Oral Arguments on Web Add One

Using information gathered from other state judiciaries and agencies in Illinois, standards have been developed in file format and presentation protocols, while allowing for flexibility to meet future needs. Approximately one-third of the country's state Supreme Courts post video recordings of their hearings on the web.

The inclusion of oral arguments is part of the redesign and continuing improvements to the Court's website and the Illinois Supreme Court's desire to leverage technology to inform and educate a broader section of the public.

Cynthia Cobbs, Director of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, said the Supreme Court's website is an effective way to provide information to judicial stakeholders and the public. The ability to watch or listen to oral arguments using a computer or MP3 player will be a valuable educational aid as well as a convenience to those interested in observing the Court's judicial proceedings.

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